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ABSTRACT

This Systems and Procedures Exchange Center (SPEC) Kit reports on eight Association of Research Libraries (ARL) members that were interviewed in July and August 1997 about how they have addressed the results of user surveys conducted between 1992 and 1995. Although libraries have recognized the importance of user surveys, sometimes the surveys get filed and forgotten. Through the use of user surveys, the institutions have discovered what their users want, and this report reveals the institutions' strategies and struggles to meet and anticipate their users' needs. While institutional differences require context-specific user surveys, a disturbing fact consistently emerged from the survey results: library users, faculty, and students are often unaware of programs and services that their libraries already offer. The ARL members interviewed represent a range of stages in the libraries' responses to their user surveys. Some have transformed their cultures into user-centered ones, some are striving to meet newly discovered needs, and some are just starting to formulate responses to their user surveys. Reports are provided on interviews with library staff at the following institutions: (1) MIT; (2) University of California at San Diego; (3) University of Arizona; (4) North Carolina State University; (5) University of Virginia; (6) University of Connecticut; (7) Ohio State University; and (8) Rice University. (Contains 11 references.) (SWC)

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After the User Survey, What Then?

Transforming Libraries

Issues and Innovations in

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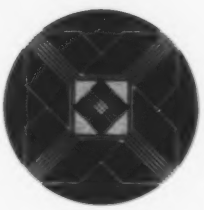

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Introduction: The Emperor's New Shift

WHEN THE librarians interviewed for "Transforming Libraries: After the User Survey, What Then?" were told the title, the response was often nervous laughter. All of them were aware of the May 1992 *College & Research Libraries* article, "The Emperor's New Clothes? Problems of the User Survey as a Planning Tool in Academic Libraries" by Doris Schlichter and J. Michael Pemberton, which indicated, among other things, that mostly what happened to user surveys was that they were filed and forgotten.

The purpose of this document in the *Transforming Libraries* series is to report on libraries that didn't do that. By providing a snapshot of where academic libraries are in changing their culture and their policies in response to what users have told them they want, it is hoped that other libraries can see what works, and what doesn't.

We accepted "user survey" to mean all kinds of information-gathering techniques: paper surveys, online questionnaires, focus groups, follow-up telephone calls. Although some of the institutions discussed researched their faculty's needs first, many of them also polled undergraduates and graduate students. Most of these surveys were taken two to five years ago, so there has been time for implementation. A few of the surveys discussed are very new (within the last year), so those libraries are just beginning to work out their responses. We also talked to a few libraries whose user surveys have sunk into oblivion. In one instance, the conductor of the survey left the institution and the work left behind

was filed and forgotten. In other instances, the political repercussions of change were simply too much for the library to handle: the survey was dropped, and nothing further seemed to happen.

The institutions reported on here strove mightily to move in the direction of change. Some, like the University of California at San Diego Libraries and the University of Arizona Libraries, have moved their cultures to a completely user-centered mode. This has changed the way they do things across the board, at the most basic levels of decision making. Other institutions are finding small, incremental ways of solving problems their users have. Some were patient in the face of how long even the smallest of changes can take to happen in a large institution, others hinted darkly at politics and procedures resistant to any sort of change.

There was a definite move to address specific, small problems very quickly, usually before the survey results were completely analyzed and published. Libraries that did this saw it as a way of providing positive feedback to those who took the trouble to articulate specific needs for the survey. Larger issues nearly always involved longer timeframes, and more people to engage in planning how to answer them.

Libraries that have taken their user surveys to heart also speak of "reallocating resources." They are not waiting for more funding to address user needs; they are trying to see what can be done with what there is. Departmental restructuring, refocused acquisitions, and other, different ways of doing the library's business are being examined and implemented.

For the most part in these institutions, while each survey is seen as finite, the process of investigating user needs is not. At the University of Arizona Libraries, for example, survey instruments are being built into the library's web site, for monitoring the changing landscape of user needs and desires on an ongoing basis.

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The best kept secret?

The eight libraries whose staff agreed to be interviewed at some length here revealed a uniformity of survey results that is striking and, in one key aspect, profoundly disturbing. First, always, and most crucially, *there is a persistent and widespread lack of knowledge among faculty and students alike as to programs and services the libraries already offer.*

Whether libraries surveyed faculty, students, or both, this result came up again and again. Students admitted to not knowing about a library's collection of videos or that books could be renewed by telephone until they read questions about it on the library's questionnaires. Faculty complained about items not owned and journals not held in their libraries when the materials were indeed in the collections.

Most of these libraries have library or faculty newsletters, place articles in campus newspapers, and are part of university web sites. Clearly, however, the means being used to get the word out about library services aren't working. Email newsletters are being tried in some places, and the hope is that those who might throw out their paper campus mail are still in the (new) habit of regularly perusing their electronic mailboxes.

Photocopying, parking, and physical surroundings

Photocopying and parking are of concern at every campus. Most of the time, university libraries try to cope with the universal unhappiness with copying by changing vendors, and only time will tell if that is an actual or only an apparent solution. Parking is seen by users as a library problem—it keeps them from getting to the library—but it is a condition that most libraries have little or no authority or control over. A drive-up book return has worked for the University of Virginia's Alderman Library, but that, of course, has

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preservation and other implications.

Physical environment is of great importance: lighting, noise levels, furniture comfort, ease of computer access…all the stuff around the books looms large in the lives of university library users. In dealing with these responses, libraries have had to recognize and perhaps attempt to reconfigure their place within the physical university spaces.

Faculty and students

The pull and tug between what the faculty wants in terms of access, which usually means everything at their desktops, and what students want, which usually means 24-hour access to the physical buildings, creates a classic example of Pogo's "insurmountable opportunity." Several libraries, North Carolina State University as an example, are or will be open 24 hours, striving to provide the clean, well-lighted (and quiet and safe) place for which undergraduates yearn. Reference service hours are also being expanded into later hours at some institutions, so it isn't just access to study space and computers that is available.

Faculty who, when asked at campus after campus what they want library resources spent on, want more library funds devoted to books and journals, also want to not have to come get those items. The university libraries contacted for this study are focusing on ways to balance electronic resources and document delivery with the cry for more and yet more print materials. They clearly hope that, by working the users' needs and desires into their decision making, some of the hard choices will be made less so.

Building an imperfect beast

The pace of change may be slow, but it does come. Framing change is difficult, but it does happen, too. Chris Sherratt of MIT Libraries tells a story that she feels reflects the five years

of growth and change since the MIT Libraries' 1992 survey. At MIT, a class is given to engineers in which they must design a foam cutter. They need to investigate what it is a customer wants, and how to build it. They learn that it can be very difficult to find out what exactly it is the customer wants and needs, and they need to guard against designing a foam cutter that they, as engineers, want to build, rather than a foam cutter that customers actually want to use. In responding to surveys and user input, librarians, too, need to build what the customers want, and not what librarians might desire. Sherratt, who has been involved in many stages of the MIT surveys, notes the difficulties in the library's attempt to gauge the users' views and needs. From the vantage point of five years later, however, she sees hope, progress, and cultural shifts.

What belongs to the library?

Dawn Talbot of the University of California at San Diego tells another cautionary tale of perception vs. reality. Along with lack of knowledge of the library's actual programs and services, UCSD identified misperceptions of what belonged to the library and for what the library was responsible. At her institution, a million dollars was spent, via a donor, on "Library Way," a beautiful walkway that leads to the library through the campus. Students were furious at the expense, saying that the money should have been spent on acquisitions, even though the library actually had nothing to do with its planning or execution. A part of the student center called the Library Lounge was also heavily criticized, even though it, too, had nothing to do with the library. If academic libraries need to get their true message out in better ways, they also need to be vigilant in rooting out misconceptions.

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Key Ideas

THESE INTERVIEWS were conducted in July and August of 1997 and comprise a snapshot of what academic libraries have done since 1992 to find out what their users want, and their attempts to meet those needs. They range from institutions that have recreated themselves as user-centered, to those struggling to meet newly recognized needs, to those whose process of response is just beginning. Many people took a lot of time to make these interviews happen. We are grateful for their generosity and expertise.

Key Ideas, What Works, Issues to Ponder

- Publicity, public relations, marketing: whatever name we give to it, its importance is absolutely key. The people for whom academic libraries exist are unaware of many of their services and programs. Ways need to be found and pursued to make that awareness central to the communication of the university.
- Users see and place emphasis on the physical surroundings and environment, not always the collections, resources, and staff.
- Parking and photocopying: how to get to the library, and how to get what's there somewhere else are crucial parts of information gathering, whether we want them to be or not.
- Faculty want to access everything from their desktops. Students want to come to the library whenever they want,

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night or day, and they want it to be comfortable and safe.

- The Triangle Research Libraries Network in North Carolina hires students as runners, searchers, photocopiers, and faxers to get materials between four campuses, as an interim measure to improve document delivery.
- The University of California at San Diego sought and received permission to survey undergraduate students in classrooms during regular class times by a carefully planned, "in and out in ten minutes" structure for the survey.
- Contacts with users at North Carolina State University helped the library to have a set of proposed programs ready when the administration asked for an immediate response to how the library would use monies from a proposed tuition increase. These included increased hours and the Department for Digital Library Initiatives, and resulted in a $4.1 million increase in the library's budget— about 35 percent.
- At the University of Arizona Libraries, the Social Sciences Team, capitalizing on faculty's penchant for visiting the library more often electronically than physically, uses email newsletters to keep each department informed.
- Crucial questions at the University of Arizona Libraries asked as decisions are made: "Where is the data to back up this decision?" and, "What is the impact of this decision on the customer?"
- At the University of California at San Diego, steps are being taken to implement a student suggestion for noise reduction. Seating is kept uniform: carrels in one space, tables that seat groups in others, so that those who wish quiet can achieve it, and those who want to confer with others can do so in areas where the seating encourages it.

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Reports from the Field

THE FOLLOWING reports provide a brief view into the purpose, planning, and execution of user surveys in eight different institutions. While some of the key ideas are similar, it is important to acknowledge that institutional differences necessitate that user surveys are best designed within the context of a specific institution. Details about these institutional surveys, including some survey documentation, appear on the *Transforming Libraries* accompanying web site.

MIT Libraries:

"We cannot be marginal to the great missions of teaching and research"

The Information Services Study undertaken by the MIT Libraries in 1991-92 has become a touchstone for change, according to project leader and Assistant Science Librarian Christine Sherratt. That study has engendered other studies and much change, with the original study still being referred to, despite its age, in discussions of user needs and services. From the perspective of library management, the process demonstrates that getting to know information-seeking behaviors can be a most useful first step along the road to creating a responsive and flexible library organization and set of services.

The final report of the study was published as part of *ARL SPEC Kit 205, User Surveys in ARL Libraries*, 1994, and appeared as ERIC document ED 366344. Sherratt also published a report online in *LIBRES* <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/stacks/1/libres>. Faculty, research staff, and students in three disciplines: Brain and Cognitive Sciences; Management

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Science; and Materials Science and Engineering; were asked about the information sources they used and how they found them. In October 1995, Sherratt gave a presentation, available on videotape with the title "The Goal Is Change," to the Boston Library Consortium on progress made and lessons learned. During a telephone interview in August 1997, Sherratt continued her update, describing how the roots of this process continue to bud and bloom in developing programs at MIT Libraries.

One powerful outcome of the survey, Sherratt recounted, was the new competencies of the library staff themselves. They learned how to conduct interviews and run focus groups (two of the methods used to gather information) and can now use those skills for other surveys and in other contexts. The three teams of people (13 individuals) struggled through the four stages of team development as ARL/OMS defines them: a cautious, polite beginning; a conflicted period where goals are defined and tempers fray; a stage where work becomes defined, tasks move along, and people feel connected to the work and to each other; and the personal and group satisfaction of performing the task. As committees so often discover, they learned that everything took longer than anticipated, and that more focus sooner would have been preferable. The interviews and focus groups made the library more personally visible to faculty and graduate students. The interview guide developed in the initial year-long effort has been modified and used again.

What the libraries learned from the survey was a combination of specific needs and general impressions, nearly all of which have been dealt with (and coped with) in a variety of ways. The desire for more electronic resources has been met by the addition of numerous electronic databases such as those provided by FirstSearch®, BIOSIS®, and EiCompendex®, many of them available over the MIT network. Subscriptions to electronic journals continue to increase, and the autumn of 1997 brings even more databases and e-journals that can be reached from faculty offices and labs as well as a Table of Contents service through UnCover®. Delivery of articles identified through

the databases has not been overlooked, either. Improved courier service, the Ariel™ system, and greater use of fax and document suppliers have improved the Libraries' ability to obtain materials not locally owned in a much shorter period of time.

The surprises that lurked in the survey results, however, were what catalyzed change in the culture of the Libraries. Those surprises included a call by some users for human contact and intervention, the importance of browsing, and an apparent lack of information and a depth of misinformation about the library and its services. To address this, the Libraries have moved to a staffing model that emphasizes hiring librarians with subject expertise and taking creative approaches to providing services. In several MIT libraries, new team-based structures have offered the opportunity to try out reconfigured information services that free up staff time, which can then be devoted to one-on-one interactions with faculty and students in the form of in-depth consultations.

The MIT Libraries continue to attack the issues raised in the Information Services Study in a variety of ways. The Library Council, comprising department heads and others, has for several years selected a number of strategic initiatives on which to focus. This year, for instance, there is renewed interest in assessing user needs to help further determine the direction the Libraries will take. Publicity and effective public relations is another focus, as is a cooperative project undertaken with the campus Information Systems Department to implement an enhanced electronic reserves system. There has also been continuing work on instruction: Sherratt wrote a report, "Instruction as a Service," in November 1995, available at <http://nimrod.mit.edu/common/project/ background.html>. Also, a position in the Engineering and Science Libraries was redefined as Assistant Librarian for Core Information Competencies; a short-term library instruction team has been formed to begin creating an infrastructure for this service.

Sherratt stresses that "We cannot be marginal to the great missions of teaching and research. ...Users are elusive, and pinning them down is difficult." She cautions, "People can't always tell you what they want."

Five years since the initial survey, the longed-for connections between the Libraries and its users are still being forged. Keeping in touch with users is now an integral part of the library planning and projection process, allowing the MIT Libraries to incorporate "lessons from the past" with new information that helps library staff and managers tailor their programs to deliver high-quality, relevant, and distinctive services.

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University of California at San Diego:

"A user-centric library"

In the mission statement of the UCSD Libraries, the goal is to have "90 percent of our primary users (faculty, students, and staff) rate the libraries' collections, services, programs, staff, and facilities as either 'outstanding' or 'excellent' by 1998." UCSD took a hard-core approach to surveying its user population: it chose a survey team to represent a cross-section of the libraries, and it hired an outside consultant, Kerry Martin, with whom they worked closely in developing the survey instruments. For undergraduates the survey team sought and won permission from faculty to use class time to administer the undergraduate survey. This written survey was administered to over 2,800 undergraduates. Faculty and graduate students received a survey through campus mail. Three rounds of follow-up produced a final response rate of over 70 percent.

An introduction to the survey process, a description of how it was conducted, and a constantly updated description of how the libraries have responded to survey results is available on the Web as part of UCSD's site at <http://orpheus.ucsd.edu/survey/index.html>. A poster presentation about the survey is

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also displayed at the various campus libraries. A three-year cycle of user surveys is now in place. Dawn Talbot, interim head of the Science and Engineering Library, describes the entire movement as toward the "user-centric" vision of University Librarian Gerald Lowell. Lowell, Talbot, and consultant Kerry Martin will be publishing a complete report of their survey activities in a library publication within the next few months.

Some of the findings were no surprise. For example, there was an absolute dissatisfaction with the photocopying service that was contracted from an outside vendor. This finding assisted library line managers in illuminating for administrators the depth and enormity of that problem. A new vendor for photocopying is now in place, the result of a team process that tackled the photocopying problem as the first results of the survey came in. The libraries increased hours of opening in the Spring quarter and will increase hours yet again in Fall 1997. Survey results showed that undergraduates want quiet, safe places to study; graduate students want to work outside of regular office hours; faculty want to use the library remotely from home or in their offices. As there were so many complaints about the lighting, the library now has a physical plant person to deal specifically with the library lighting.

Talbot stressed that the library needs to meet undergraduates on their own turf; they are intimidated by the library, and reject library instruction. Better ways of marketing have to be found and developed. "We need to talk to users, listen to them, and meet their needs" said Talbot, as UCSD libraries move toward the UCSD Libraries vision of a user-centric library.

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University of Arizona Libraries:

How close is "I want what I want when I want it"?

In Tucson, perhaps the most "transformed" library is building a matrix of user-centered programs across all of its work. Three people at the University of Arizona responded to our questions, each from the perspective of their own teams. Shelley Phipps noted that the library began using process improvement methodology in 1994-95, whereby teams study key processes identified by customers and staff as needing improvement. Focus groups and online and paper surveys were used, and both student and faculty groups were polled.

Phipps said it was difficult to get faculty to offer honest feedback. They were so conditioned to believe that the library was doing the best it could with what it had that they were reluctant to make negative comments, or say anything that might lead the library staff to think they were not appreciated.

Each of the process improvement teams used survey and focus group information to design their new processes (thus far: reshelving, interlibrary borrowing and lending to consortial partners, photocopy services, reserves, and acquiring/cataloging of "mainstream" items). They tested to see if their solutions eliminated problems and complaints, and they tested them against what people said they wanted and needed. After each set of solutions was implemented, they conducted similiar surveys or focus groups to measure the difference in response.

Faculty, especially, tended to underestimate the library's ability to make things both better and faster. Students, when asked for their ideal, wanted free photocopying, every book on the shelf when they needed it—"I want what I want when I want it." Phipps added that "we tried to see how close we could come to that."

Customer needs and satisfaction assessments were built into all process improvement efforts; the framework for customer focus and feedback was set as a driver in decision making; and this year, the library is working toward helping teams

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gather customer input more quickly and continously to use it to set team performance measures.

Robert Mitchell talked about two specific customer feedback projects. The Social Sciences Team did a needs assessment survey in 1995-96, on paper. An online customer satisfaction survey called LPEMS (Library Performance Effectiveness Management) runs constantly. While originally the team intended to survey both on paper and online, they abandoned this idea when paper test survey found that the data thus tracked was close enough to the online information to make little difference in the results.

The Social Sciences Team surveyed faculty and graduate students in the three social sciences colleges in 1996, and were surprised, as we have noted over and over, about how little some faculty knew about the library's collections and services. Since they visited the library more often electronically than physically, the Social Sciences Team developed email newsletters to send to each department, distributed a statement about serials holdings, and set out to find ways of improving photocopying and more user-friendly interfaces for the most problematic databases.

Merit raises go to all staff, in equal amounts, based on how well the library scores in biweekly LPEMS external customer surveys. "The more we satisfy our customers (at least those who bother to express an opinion via our electronic survey) the more money each of us will see in our paychecks," notes Mitchell. The controversial LPEMS internal customer survey (staff rating library teams) was dropped to end its abuses and to get staff to focus on external customer issues.

Designing, validating, and administering needs assessment surveys is extremely time-consuming, so a Needs Assessment Team is trying to develop a universal electronic survey to deal with this. Mitchell notes that "We don't just brainstorm questions. We hold focus groups to find out the issues our customers think are important, and then we design questions to get at those issues."

Laura Bender of the Science-Engineering Team also found that their faculty didn't know about many library services, nor

did they read the faculty and staff newspaper where library information usually was disseminated, so they have moved to email as their primary marketing tool.

Their faculty also emphasized the continuation, if not increase, of book and journal acquisitions. In response, the library has examined document delivery and electronic full text services. The *Science Citation Index*, specifically requested, has been purchased in CD-ROM format and the library is looking into the web product when it is available. Faculty and graduate students want everything from their desktops, and this becomes more and more possible as campus wiring and hardware are upgraded.

Bender concludes, "We are now conditioned to ask, 'Where is the data to back up this decision?' and 'What is the impact of this decision on the customer?'"

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North Carolina State University Libraries

"To listen to our user communities and respond to their changing needs."

While the above statement has been a part of the NCSU Libraries' mission statement for a number of years, its import has come to the forefront of activities at the library more recently, beginning with a 1992 study. That joint effort, funded by the Council on Library Resources and including the libraries of NCSU, Duke University, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (charter members of the Triangle Research Libraries Network), included a large user survey. The initial work was reported in *ARL SPEC Kit 205, User Surveys in ARL Libraries*, 1994. Responses to it have engendered other surveys and a number of outcomes reported by Jinnie Davis, Assistant Director for Planning and Research at NCSU Libraries.

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The strong desire for easier access and delivery among the Triangle group is being developed by a resource delivery manager, a position created at the NCSU Libraries by reallocation of resources. As an interim measure, students on each of the now four member campuses have been hired as runners to find materials, make photocopies, and send faxes for document delivery. Trucks deliver books among the four campuses, and the goal is 24-hour turnaround.

User studies conducted by the University include a campus survey done in 1993 as part of reaccreditation, and regular surveys of graduating seniors. While these surveys have small library content, they do provide some information and the impetus to the library to do follow-up studies of its own. The first, on collections use, took place in the spring of 1997 in response to the clear concern that collections should be a top priority. Other information gleaned from university surveys included the desire by graduate students for more impact on the library's collections. Now, the university library committee always has three graduate student members. A reconstituted collection development staff doubled in number, with an emphasis on outreach. Now, a collection manager can be contacted in person, by phone, web, email, or fax by a student with a book request.

On a specific and practical level, graduate students requested—and got—small metal carts scattered throughout the library to ease the transfer of piles of material from here to there.

The near-universal passion for more and better photocopying is being satisfied by copiers now added to two more stack floors in the main library. Wide format and color copiers are also available. Davis notes that the Libraries believe that if they can offer broader, Kinko's-type services, it should, as part of its service to the campus community.

Another near-universal undergraduate desire is to have the library open more hours. The main library at NCSU is now open 24 hours a day, and patrolled by uniformed and trained security staff. Because undergraduates wanted reference and circulation staff available for many of those hours, new

positions were created for library staff who wanted or needed to work overnight. The four campus branch libraries also had their hours increased, although only the main library is open on a 24-hour basis.

The user survey planned by the NCSU Libraries for the 1997-98 academic year will focus on the use of electronic resources. Two projects are already underway to address those resources. By merging some departments (e.g., documents and reference), 15,000 square feet were freed up to become the Learning and Research Center for the Digital Age, now under construction. Librarians to staff various components of this center have already been hired. For example, the Learning Technologies Center's main purpose is to lead the library in creating advanced web-based services and programs integrated into teaching and learning. Also, a newly created Department for Digital Library Initiatives is based here and includes a web development unit. The University's new Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning also sought space in this location; Davis emphasized the "synergy of propinquity" that having this unit within the library will facilitate.

Also within the Learning and Research Center for the Digital Age is a gift from the Class of 1990, the Information Techonologies Teaching Center. It's a place for the library to teach new technology tools, hardware and software, to the campus community, with Mac, Unix, and Windows labs.

The emphasis on listening to the user has brought about two spectacular developments at NCSU that have implications for the larger academic library community. When asked for an immediate response in how the library would use a proposed tuition increase, the library had a set of programs at the ready, including the above-described digital library and increased hours, that resulted in a $4.1 million increase to its base budget —an increase of about 35 percent. The plans for these programs came directly out of the ongoing conversations with users that have sprung from many sources, including the user surveys.

The second development, touted in a *Library Journal* editorial (June 1, 1997), is the founding of the Scholarly Communication Center at NCSU. This center, described in its web site

(URL: <http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/issues/SChomepage.html>) will have as its head a scholarly communication librarian to guide in the policy development of issues of copyright, fair use, database licensing, and user privacy. That position, expected to be filled in the autumn of 1997, was created in response to the endorsement of NCSU faculty, students, and administration under the aegis of Susan Nutter, Vice Provost and Director of NCSU libraries. The Scholarly Communication Center is also located in the Learning and Research Center for the Digital Age.

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University of Virginia Libraries:

Customer service as "the first important thing"

"Collecting data from the people we're serving is the first thing to do when allocating resources, and there is no sense in collecting data unless you are going to follow up." Kendon Stubbs, Associate University Librarian at the University of Virginia, noted the changes since the faculty survey in 1993 (published in *User Surveys in Academic Libraries, April 11, 1997, ARL Nashville*), its followup survey in 1996, and its survey of graduate and undergraduate students in 1994.

Virginia has incorporated the focus on customer service as "the first important thing" before collections or policies as a critical path to setting library priorities. As of July 1997, two FTE positions have been added to the library to collect and analyze data from circulation, from ongoing surveys, and from focus groups so that constant input and feedback will be available and studied.

When Karin Wittenborg became University Librarian in October 1993, she began to institute changes, based in part on

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the 1993 survey. Library hours during holiday breaks and intersessions were increased, the Science & Engineering Library was partially air-conditioned. In departments like Psychology, where the 1993 faculty survey indicated that faculty felt the library was weak in monographs, money was reallocated for retrospective buying as well as for ongoing aquisitions. The perennial parking problem was alleviated somewhat by the installation of a drive-up bookdrop behind the main library.

The Alderman Library (the main library) was reorganized in part in response to the finding that, for a majority of faculty in 1993, it was not the primary library. Departments and selectors were realigned to reflect a more subject-oriented approach.

While in-person visits account, in both surveys, for the greatest percentage of use (91 percent visit at least monthly), faculty do search VIRGO, the library's online system, from their homes and offices, telephone the library, and use the library's web pages at least once per month.

The rating of their primary libraries by faculty over the two surveys found that, while those in the sciences still rated the library overall lower than those in the humanities and social sciences, all three ratings went up from 1993 to 1996. For the 1996 faculty survey, humanities overall rated libraries 4.35, social sciences 4.36, and sciences 3.99 out of a possible 5.

The finding common to virtually all library user surveys, that users don't know about library services available to them, did undergo change in the three years between faculty surveys at Virginia. "Help with electronic databases," for example, went from an 18 percent visibility to 50 percent between 1993 and 1996. There was some faculty unease with electronic resources in 1993, which led the library to reallocate some monies in 1994-95 for user education. That has clearly borne fruit, and user education is now an ongoing program. While the faculty continue to place highest priority on books and journals, and have an insatiable appetite for more and yet more journals, user education about spiraling serial costs and providing alternative modes of delivery respond to those priorities.

The contrast between faculty surveys and the student survey done in 1994 is instructive. In general, students rated the libraries lower than the 1993 faculty did, and they tended to give higher scores overall rather than on individual items. They visit the library far more than faculty do: twice a week for over 70 percent of graduate students and over 40 percent of undergraduates, and they use the library for study as well as research. Students are very concerned with noise levels, temperature, uncomfortable furniture, and, inevitably, the lack of convenient parking. Both sets of students are not happy with photocopying, change machines, and computer printers at the library. Undergraduates are much less likely to put a hold or search on a book, or ask for interlibrary loan; they browse, ask a friend, try another library, or give up.

Like the faculty, students' highest priority for the library is for books, but they are aware of and interested in electronic resources, texts, and journals.

Virginia's user surveys have moved into the realm of regular work rather than an unusual blip on the research screen. Besides the interview with Kendon Stubbs, comments for this report were taken from Barbara S. Selby's Faculty Survey Report dated September 25, 1996, and the Student Survey dated September 29, 1994, prepared by the University of Virginia Library Management Information Committee.

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University of Connecticut Libraries:

"We are the first"

Unlike most of the other user surveys discussed herein, the University of Connecticut Libraries faculty survey is very

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recent. The final report was issued on August 6, 1997. The survey took place in the fall of 1996, and was the first time, said Associate Director Brinley Franklin, that the Libraries undertook a systematic survey of its users. The faculty, graduate student, and undergraduate general surveys being conducted from 1996-98 will serve as benchmarks for future surveys, which are being planned at two- or three-year intervals. Point-of-service surveys for more specific feedback on certain services have also been conducted recently and more surveys are planned on subjects like preferred shelving arrangements for current newspapers and journals.

Since the UConn Libraries have only recently embarked on a structured approach to user surveys, they have benefited from experiences at other ARL libraries, including the University of Virginia's. In fact, one of the most informative data analyses the UConn Libraries performed on their faculty survey data was a visibility/satisfaction matrix employed at the UVa Libraries in their earlier user studies.

About one-third (36 percent) of the UConn faculty responded to the mailed-out paper survey. Few of them expressed a willingness to participate in follow-up by phone or via focus group. Faculty did overwhelmingly respond that journal and book collections should be maintained and augmented; they also want remote access to electronic databases. While the faculty's desire for more journals is a difficult one for the Libraries to respond to, Franklin expressed interest in observing if the Libraries' increased focus on document delivery would positively affect faculty attitudes in future surveys.

Once again, library staff were surprised when faculty indicated that they were unaware of library services already provided. Franklin also thought that the overall satisfaction level reported by faculty might cause some library staff to rethink the traditional tendency to rely on anecdotal information about user wants and the conviction that the library is already doing the right things.

Since the undergraduate and graduate students will not be surveyed until the 1997-98 academic year, some responses to faculty desires are being put off until student needs and desires

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can be considered. UConn intends to mail out surveys to graduate students and to survey undergraduates in the classroom, as was done recently at the University of California, San Diego. However, the UConn Libraries are responding immediately to faculty on issues of high visibility and low satisfaction, such as public photocopying and reshelving speed.

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Ohio State University Libraries:

"Let's get something done."

The Ohio State University Libraries survey of faculty is also a recent survey: it was conducted and completed in the spring of 1996 and its report was released in the spring of 1997. Virginia Tiefel, Chair of the survey task force, said that Director of Libraries William Studer asked for a report not filled with data, but with specific recommendations in response to what was found. He asked not for spot reactions, but for ongoing programs. Three sections of the task force were formed, to complete their charges by January, 1998. One will make recommendations for the main library, one will respond to staffing needs, and the third, which Tiefel chairs, will investigate library/faculty communication.

OSU libraries are facing some daunting challenges in responding to their survey results. Many of the strong negative feelings expressed by the faculty are about circumstances over which the library has no control. However, the distaste for the physical environment of the main library was intense and widespread. Thorough and regular cleaning, better lighting, recarpeting, and restroom maintenance were strongly suggested. The perception on the part of the faculty that library

staff were overworked and could not address faculty needs will be examined.

The biggest surprise to those conducting the OSU survey will, however, not surprise anyone perusing this document: the lack of faculty knowledge about programs and services already offered by the library. Tiefel's group is looking at the library's web site, the library newsletter, and other possible ways of getting the word out.

Tiefel noted that librarians have been aware for some time of the deteriorating physical plant and lack of faculty awareness of library services, but felt strongly that the survey gave those impressions a local habitation and a name that much strengthened their import.

The Task Force's three groups are focusing their energies on making something happen in response to faculty needs. It can be done, as other institutions reported on here have demonstrated.

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Rice University Libraries:

From the "survey from hell" to making it work

When Fondren Library of Rice University surveyed its user population in 1992, it had been many years since any previous survey, and Fondren attempted to capture data on all its users: faculty, students, the non-affiliated Houston community, and its Friends of Fondren. This many-headed hydra became "the survey from hell," as Assistant University Librarian Kay Flowers described it. It was originally published in the library's newsletter, *News from Fondren* (Spring 1992), and reprinted in

User Surveys in ARL Libraries, SPEC Kit 205. But from this too-large and unwieldy beginning came a series of smaller surveys, run in the fall of each year from 1992 through 1995, with pared-down questions tailored to each audience, and intensive followup.

The initial, broadly-based 1992 survey uncovered some of the usual results: faculty wanted more books and journals, students wanted more quiet spaces and better copy machines. Students' desire for more and more library access has culminated in Fondren's move to a 24-hour library in the Fall 1997 semester. Flowers noted that this student need stems not only from the desire for quiet, comfortable places to study, but also to the need for access to computers 24 hours a day.

The initial survey, taken in the Spring semester of 1992, was studied for faculty response and comment and published in the Fall 1992 *News from Fondren*. The perennial and thorny issues of whether to arrange periodicals by title or by call number, separately or interfiled with the book collection, were addressed. The Fondren arrangement is by call number, and more than two-thirds of the faculty were in favor of that arrangement. Responses were split almost evenly between interfiling periodicals with books or housing them separately. Faculty wanted more information on using the library, and library staff hoped to develop materials that would assist them without requiring a large investment of time and study.

In November 1994, every faculty member at Rice was contacted by phone and asked to complete a library survey: only those who agreed to complete surveys were sent them. "The most productive and revealing aspects of the survey" noted the report in *News from Fondren* (Spring 1995), were discovered via follow-up calls made by librarians and consultants to faculty who rated overall services as poor. Since in many instances faculty were operating under outdated or incorrect information about library policies, these phone calls operated as a corrective. In comparing the two surveys of faculty (1992 and 1994), usage of library services remained constant except for use of interlibrary loan. Use of ILL went from slightly over half to three-quarters of faculty using the service.

Unlike what seemed to be the case at other universities, Rice faculty actually read both the Library's *News from Fondren* and Infomation Technology's *Rice Computing News*—or say they do. Replacing either or both with an email newsletter doesn't seem to be the right move.

While there was a slight increase in the faculty who said the library collection was adequate for their teaching from 1992 to 1995, the library felt strongly that it should be meeting nearly 100 percent of teaching needs. Materials budget enhancement requests based on faculty recommendations to close that gap have been developed.

Flowers said that the surveys have validated what the library believed was true from observation and anecdote, and provided support for various library initiatives.

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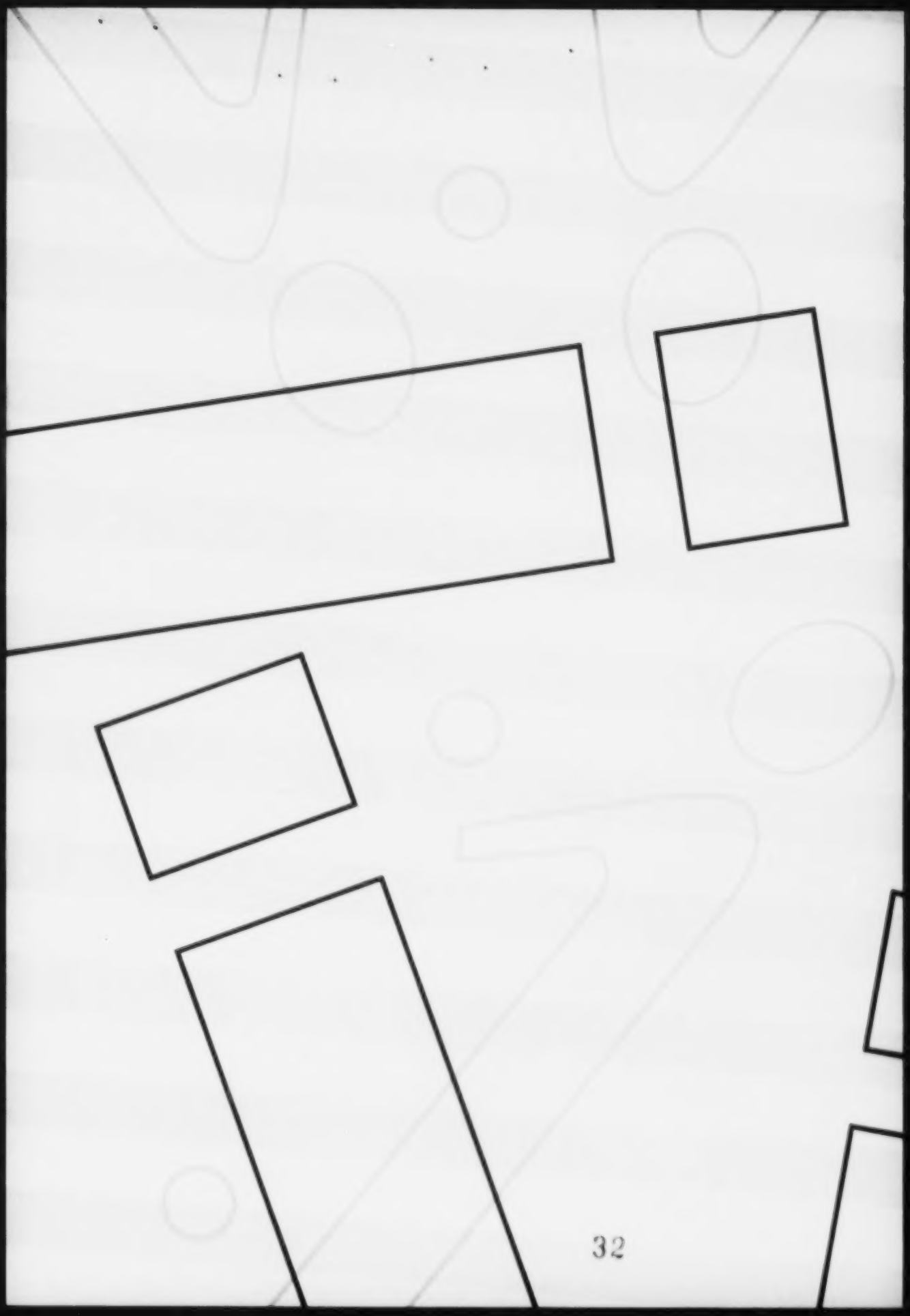

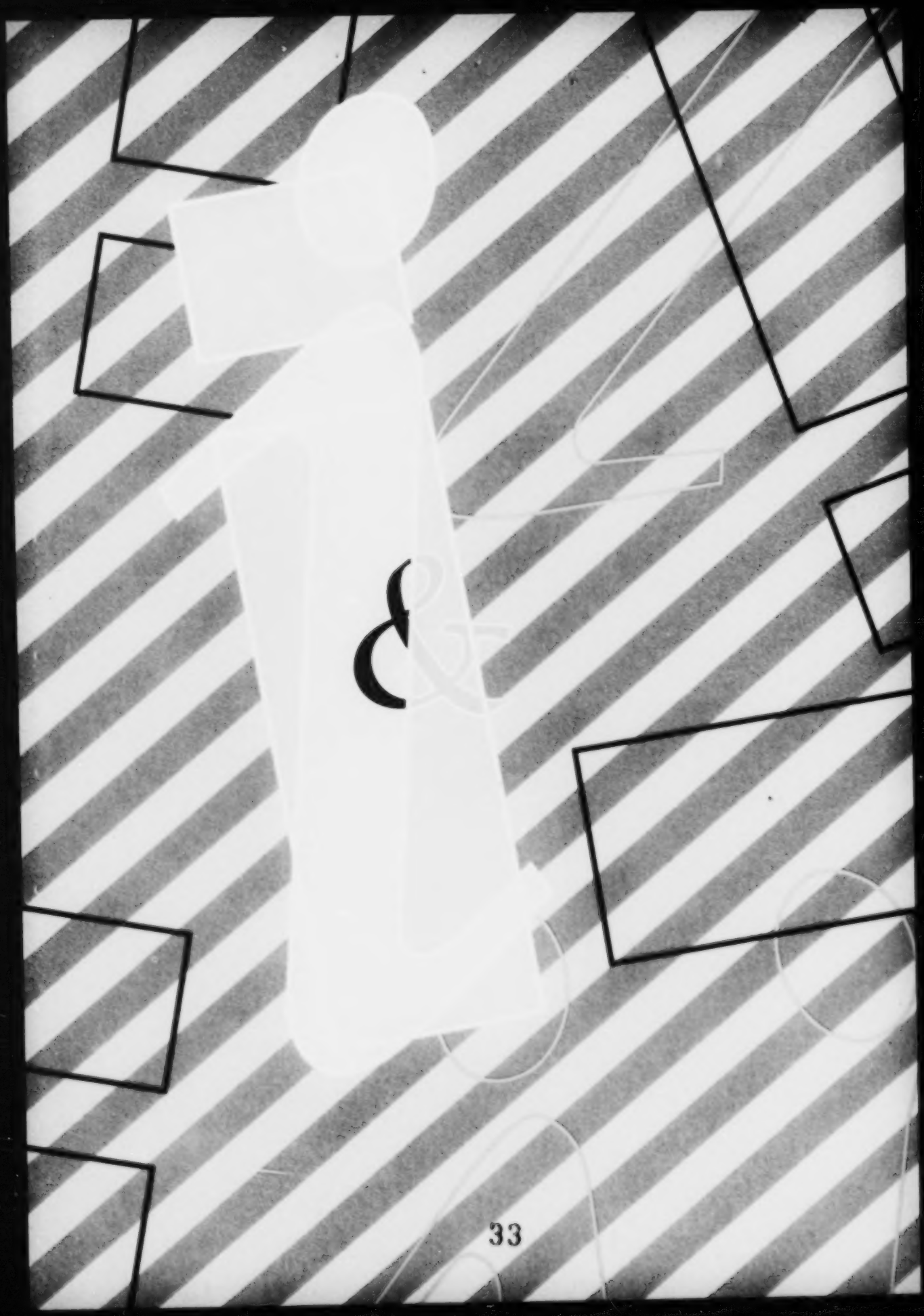

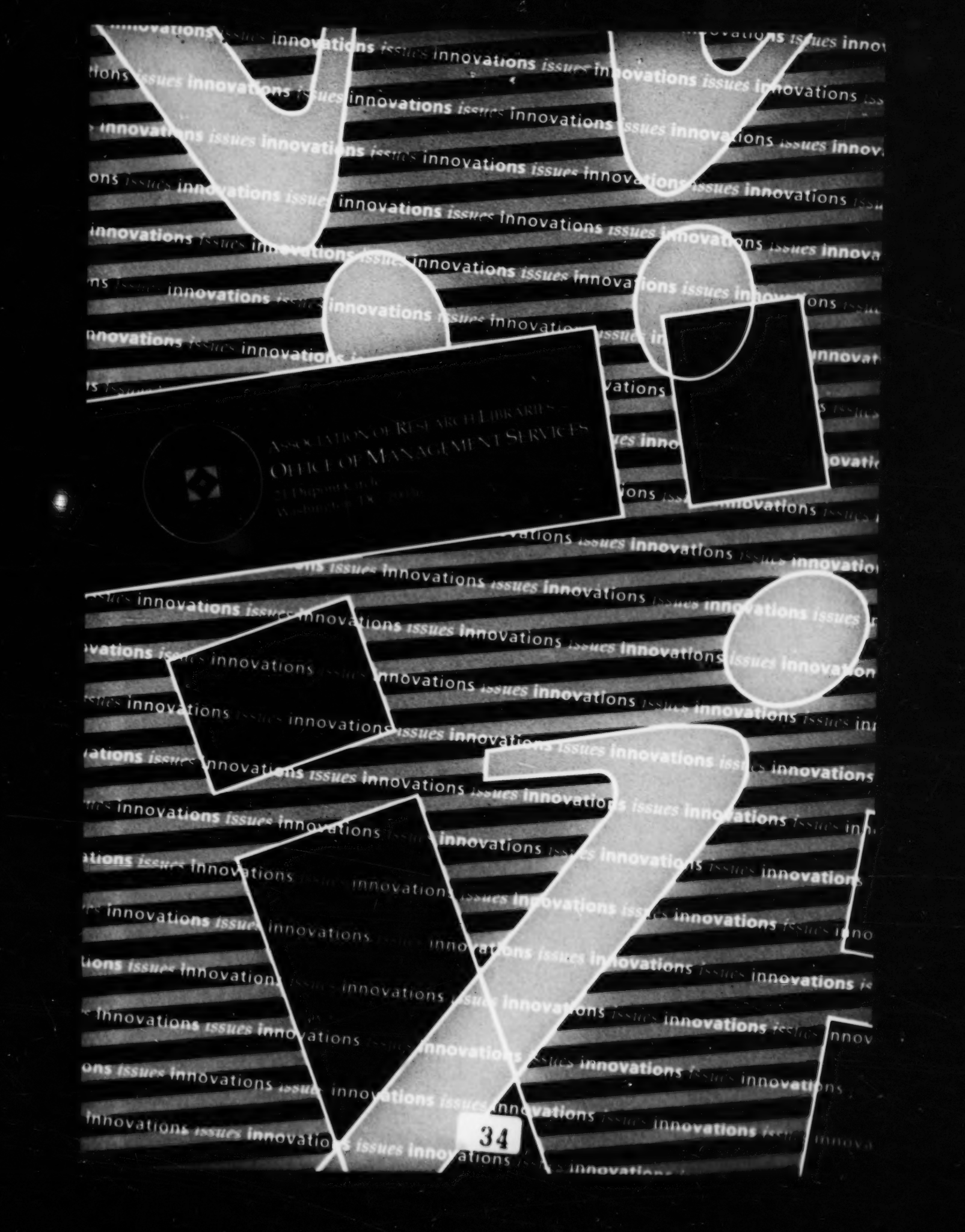
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